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carefully chosen and well balanced executive—each person having his duties clearly defined—and a strict discipline thoroughly maintained. The result is perfect order. In the other case all this is reversed. The Dean, perhaps, knows nothing about music, and frequently cares as little. But, instead of taking counsel with his organist, he takes another clergyman as ignorant as himself, and places him over the organist and choir with the title of Precentor. Here, then, we have a fruitful source of discord. If the organist be a conscientious man, he will strive hard to make things go straight; but having no real power, what can he do? Should he have occasion to complain of the members of the choir, he only gains their ill-will and determined opposition to all his desires; whilst, if he keep his own counsel, he probably has to view with pain the ill-concealed mirth provoked by the blundering attempts of the Precentor to set things right. There remains, then, for him but two alternatives; either to tolerate matters as they are, and proclaim aloud his inability to interfere—a course adopted by half the cathedral organists in England; or—which is far more straightforward and manly—at once resign a post in which there is no honour and but little profit. As for the choirmen, they have every incentive to either shirk their work or do it badly; first, by being (along with the organist), shamefully underpaid, and then, by the inability of their clerical head, to distinguish who is right or who is wrong. In the former case, it is not unusual to find a lay clerk getting the whole of the week's duty performed by an inferior deputy, whilst he attends his pupils, whose lessons pay him far better than his church appointment does. And so the Church suffers. The chorister, like his elder brother, the lay clerk, receives a miserable pittance, and what is worse, an education which would disgrace a national school; the result of which is that the sons of people of an inferior station alone offer themselves, and the whole tone of the choir becomes lowered.

That all these evils may be thoroughly eradicated we fully believe; and to this end we beg leave to offer the following suggestions, which are the result of some experience. To begin with. Let the Dean, if he consider it absolutely essential that there should be a Precentor, take the appointment himself (there is already a precedent for this), and let him make out the music-list in conjunction with his organist. He then becomes responsible for the appropriateness of the words, the organist for the music. But the responsibility of the organist should not rest here. He should be equally accountable for the manner of performance; and, on the other hand, he should be entire master of his choir. If he have the responsibility, he should also have power, and the support of the Dean should never be wanting. All this pre-supposes that the organist has been carefully chosen—that his musical abilities are of a high order; his playing good and solid; his talent as a choirmaster satisfactory; his social position and character high. This, in its turn, pre-supposes the salary to be sufficiently high to induce a man of this class to give his whole and undivided attention to his church work; and when we consider the incomes made by musical men in the exercise of their profession, it is not too much to say that the salary of a cathedral organist should be quite equal to that of a canon residentiary. He should also be made a member of the chapter. For, as the responsibility

attached to the directorship of the choral part of the service is only second in importance to that of the Dean, it would be only natural to expect him to have a voice in what might be termed the working committee. As for the lay clerks, their salary should bear a proportion to that of the higher offices, similar to that which it did a century and a half ago, and *the principle of life-appointments should be abolished*. This should apply to the organist as well as the choir. As soon as a man has been chosen to fill a vacancy, he should be appointed for a year on probation. After which (in addition to his salary) there should be a certain proportion of his income kept back to form a superannuation fund, to be forfeited in case of a dismissal for bad conduct; whilst, on the other hand, the chapter should keep the forfeited sums apart, for the purpose of adding something to the funds of those who have exhibited extra zeal in their work. The choristers should reside within the precincts with a clergyman, to whom should be entrusted their education. Thus, the home influences, which sometimes run so counter to the principles inculcated in church, and occasionally exercise a pernicious effect upon a whole choir of boys, would be reduced to a minimum. And, lastly, there should be a more frequent personal communication between the clerical and lay servants of the church. If the lay clerks are paid at the same rate, and treated much in the same way as an unskilled labourer, is it a matter for astonishment if they be somewhat rough and uncouth in manner? A man will always catch something of the tone of those with whom he is most constantly brought in contact. Therefore, we repeat, that if it be desired that he should act as a gentleman, first of all give him a salary that is a competence, and then treat him as an equal until you find him irreclaimable, when it would be an advantage to the remainder of the staff to get rid of him at once.

Under any circumstances, however, something should be done to remove the stigma that now rests upon Cathedral Choirs. The apathy of the clergy, the inefficiency of the organists and lay clerks, the dry antiquated character of the music, and the utterly lifeless tone of the whole performance, renders a Cathedral service—whether viewed in comparison with that of an advanced district church or apart by itself—a matter of disgust to the earnest Christian and a scandal to the whole nation.

(We beg leave to call the attention of our readers to a notice in another part of our paper of Mr. Pullen's pamphlet on "*The real work of a Cathedral, and why it is not done*," which came to hand after the above article was written.)—*Ed. Mus. Times.*

MOZART'S "DON GIOVANNI."

A FABULOUS EVENT WHICH OCCURRED TO A TRAVELLING ENTHUSIAST.

(From the German of Hoffmann.)

By SABILLA NOVELLO.

THE loud ringing of a bell, a piercing cry of "The theatre is going to begin!" aroused me from the sweet sleep into which I had sunk. Basses grumble—a drum beats—a trumpet sounds—a shrill A held on by the hautboy—violins are tuned—I rub my eyes. Can it be that the ever-watchful Satan, while I am slightly overpowered—? No, I am still in the room of the hotel, where, last evening, I rested my half-dislocated bones. Just above my head hangs the stately tassel of the bell-rope. I pull

it violently—the waiter appears. “What in heaven’s name is all the noise near me? Is there a concert in the house?” “Your Excellence—(I had ordered champagne at the *table d’hôte* dinner)—is, perhaps, not aware that this hotel joins the theatre; this papered door leads to a little corridor, out of which you can at once enter No. 23, that is, the stranger’s box.” “What?—theatre?—stranger’s box?”

“Yes, the stranger’s little box, holds two, or at most, three persons; just fit for very genteel strangers; papered in green, with a grated blind, close to the stage. If it please your Excellence, to-night we perform *Don Giovanni*, by the celebrated Mr. Mozart, of Vienna; the box ticket one dollar eight groschen—we can put it in the bill.” This last the waiter said, as he opened the box-door, so quickly had I stepped into the corridor, on hearing the words, “*Don Giovanni*.” The theatre, considering the size of the town, was large, tastefully ornamented and brilliantly lighted; the boxes and pit were crowded. The first chords of the overture convince me that, should the singers correspond with the orchestra, I shall enjoy a treat in hearing the splendid masterpiece. During the *Andante* I am seized by awe of the fearful, unearthly *regno al pianto*; a shuddering presentiment of something terrible fills my soul; the exciting fanfare in the 7th bar of the *Allegro* sounds like exulting insolence. I fancy I can see fiery demons stretch their claws from out the black darkness, catching at heedless souls who gaily dance on the thin surface covering the groundless abyss. Before my mental vision stands clearly the conflict of human nature with superhuman evil powers, hovering about it awaiting its destruction. At last the storm is calmed. The curtain rises—chilled, and discontentedly wrapping his mantle about him, Leporello paces before the pavilion: “*Notte e giorno faticar*.” So, so—in Italian? Although given in Germany, yet in Italian. How charming! I shall hear all the recitatives, and each piece just as the great master felt and wrote it. Don Juan rushes out, followed by Donna Anna, who detains the offender by his cloak. What an appearance! She might be taller, slimmer, or more majestic in her walk; but what a head. Eyes, from which flash love, rage, hate and despair, like fiery rays from a burning-glass, piercing, unquenchable as Greek fire, to the inmost core. The dishevelled masses of her dark hair flow over her neck in waving locks; the white night-dress treacherously displays her exquisite figure; agitated by the horrible attempt, her heart beats in convulsive throbs; and now—what a voice! “*Non sperar, se non m’uccidi*,” the clear metallic tones rise through the storm of instruments, like gleaming lightning through clouds. In vain Don Juan attempts to disengage himself; but, can he wish it? Does his wicked deed render him cowardly, or does an inward struggle between love and hate rob him of strength? The old father has forfeited his life for his folly of fighting a young adversary in darkness. Don Juan and Leporello advance on the stage in recitative dialogue, the former throws back his cloak, and stands in his splendid dress of crimson, slashed velvet, with silver embroidery—a powerful commanding form, a handsome face, with aquiline nose, keen eyes and sensual lips; the peculiar play of the muscles above his brow imparts something Mephistophelian to his expression, and, without spoiling the beauty of his face, causes an involuntary dread; it is as though he

possessed the baneful power of the rattlesnake, as though women, once gazed upon by him, could not resist him, and drawn by strange attraction, were impelled to complete their own destruction. Leporello, tall and thin, in a red and white striped doublet, little red mantle, white hat and red feather, trips about, his features expressing a mixture of good nature, roguery and ironical impudence; his black eyebrows contrast curiously with his grizzled hair and beard; one can see that the old fellow deserves to be Don Juan’s aid and servant. They have escaped unhurt over the wall; torches—Donna Anna and Ottavio appear—a neat, well-dressed, well-behaved little man, one-and-twenty years of age, at most. It is probable that, being Donna Anna’s betrothed, he dwells in the same house, as he was so quickly summoned; had he hurried up at the first noise, which he doubtless heard, he might have saved the father; but he stayed to dress, and altogether is not fond of exposing himself at night. “*Ma qual s’offre, oh Dei*.” More than despair at the cruel outrage is expressed in this heartrending recitative and duet. Don Juan’s violence, which merely threatened her fall, and dealt death to her father, could not alone force such tones from her oppressed heart—a raging inward combat calls them forth.

Later on, just as the tall, thin Donna Elvira, possessed of beauty, great though impaired, was reproaching Don Juan with “*Tu nido d’inganni*,” whilst the compassionate Leporello remarks, “*Parla come un libro stampato*,” I fancied I felt a movement near, or behind me; possibly some stranger had opened the door and quietly entered; this went to my heart like a dagger! I had been so happy all alone in my box, undisturbedly enjoying the excellent performance of such a masterpiece—embracing it with all my sensitive nerves, as with polypus arms, and drawing it into my inmost self. A single word, especially if common-place, would have dragged me cruelly from my poetical and musical rhapsody. I resolved to take no notice of my neighbour, and to avoid a word or even a glance, by absorbing myself in the representation; leaning my head on my hand, with my back turned towards the new comer, I gazed out of the box. The continuation of the opera answered to the excellent commencement; the captivating little Zerlina consoles the good-natured oaf, Masetto, with coquettish tones and caresses; Don Juan, in the rollicking air, “*Fin ch’han dal vino*,” expresses unreservedly the contempt his reckless soul feels for the pigmies around him, whose puny hopes he delights to delude; the Mephistophelian muscles in his forehead work more mischievously than ever. The masks appear; their trio is a prayer that soars in pure harmonies towards heaven; the drop-scene flies up—all is bustle—goblets clash; in gay confusion mix peasants and multifarious masks, attracted by Don Juan’s festival. Now come the three, sworn to vengeance; all becomes more serious until the dance begins; Zerlina is saved, and in the thundering finale, Don Juan, sword in hand, courageously rushes against his enemies, knocks from the hand of the gentlemanly bridegroom his steel court rapier, and makes his way through the common folk, throwing them one over another, as did the brave Roland the army of the tyrant Cymork, so that a ludicrous and ignominious rout ensues.

I had already fancied that I felt close behind me a gentle, warm breath, and detected the rustling of a silk dress, which led me to suppose the presence of a

woman; but, entirely absorbed in the ideal world of the opera, I heeded this not. Now that the curtain fell, I looked at my neighbour. No! no words can describe my astonishment! Donna Anna, in precisely the costume I had just seen her wear on the stage, stood behind me, and fixed on me the piercing gaze of her intelligent eyes; it appeared to me that her mouth moved with a slightly ironical smile, by which I saw myself and my ridiculous stare reflected. I felt the necessity of addressing her, yet could not move my tongue, dumb with surprise, I may almost say fright. At last the words, "How is it possible for you to be here?" burst involuntarily from my lips. She answered in purest Tuscan, that if I did not understand and speak Italian, she could not enjoy the pleasure of my conversation, as she could only use that language. Her sweet words sounded like music, while talking enhanced the expression of her dark blue eyes. My pulses beat quickly, and my nerves trembled; it was Donna Anna, without doubt; it did not occur to me to ponder on the feasibility of her being simultaneously on the stage and in my box; as, in a happy dream, all that is strange seems compatible and perfectly comprehensible to simple faith, untroubled by the so-called reasonings of waking life, thus, in the presence of this wondrous creature, I lapsed into a sort of somnambulism, through which I easily comprehended the mysterious links that connected us, so intrinsically, that even whilst she was on the stage, she had felt it impossible to disunite herself from me. How willingly, my dear Theodor, would I repeat to thee the remarkable dialogue which now began between the Signora and myself! But in attempting to write in German what she uttered, I find each word stiff and inexpressive, each phrase unapt to convey what she expressed with ease and grace in Tuscan. Whilst she talked of *Don Giovanni*, of her part in the opera, it seemed to me that the depths of the master-work discovered themselves to me for the first time; that I could penetrate their profundity, and clearly discern the fantastic beings of a poet-world. She said her whole existence was music; that whilst singing, she often fancied she could understand those secret motions of her soul inexpressible by words. "Yes, I understand them clearly at such moments," she continued, with glistening eyes and eager voice, "but all around me remain cold and lifeless, and when I am applauded for some difficult scale or intricate passage, icy claws seize upon my glowing heart. But thou—thou comprehendest me, for I know the wondrous region where prevails the magic influence of tone, has opened its portals to thee." "How, thou enchanting wondrous being—thou knowest me?" "Didst thou not express through music, the frenzy of yearning love in thy last opera? Oh, I have understood thee; thy soul spoke to mine through thy melodies. Know—(here she called me by my Christian name)—I have sung *Thee*, and thy melodies are *Myself*!" The stage bell sounded—a sudden paleness overspread Donna Anna's unrouged face—she placed her hand on her heart, as though in acute pain, and sighing out, "Unhappy Anna, thy most wretched moments are approaching!" disappeared from the box. The first act of the opera had enchanted me; but after this strange interview, the music produced on me quite a novel and superhuman effect; it was as though the most beatific dreams were realised in waking life—as though the ecstatic forebodings of my enraptured soul were embodied in sounds,

moulding themselves into rare disclosures. During Donna Anna's scene, I was overwhelmed in a soft, warm rush of beatitude, and closed my eyes with a sigh of endless yearning. The finale commenced in blasphemous joy: "*Già la mensa.*" Don Juan sits lovingly between two maidens; cork after cork flies out, dis-imprisoning the hermetically-sealed, impetuous spirits within, which shall soon gain undisputed sovereignty over him. The scene is a small chamber with a large Gothic casement, through which one looks out upon the night; even when Elvira recalls broken oaths to the unfaithful one, lightnings flash through the windows, and the murmurs of the approaching storm are heard. Then violent knocking. Elvira and the maidens fly, while to terrific chords of unearthly sound, enters the majestic marble colossus, by whose side Don Juan looks but a pigmy; the ground shakes under the ponderous steps of the giant; Don Juan, above the thunder, above the howling of demons, shouts his frightful "*No*;" the hour of destruction has arrived; the statue disappears, the chamber fills with lurid fumes, out of which grin horrible phantoms; Don Juan writhes in hell tortures surrounded by demons; an explosion, as though a thousand thunderbolts fell—Don Juan, the imps have disappeared, one knows not how, while Leporello lies senseless in a corner of the chamber. What an agreeable relief is the entrance of the remaining characters, who seek in vain for Don Juan, removed from human vengeance by the dark powers; we feel, at length, to have escaped from the sphere of hellish spirits.

Donna Anna looks entirely changed; a deathly pallor covers her face, her eyes are dull, her voice tremulous and unequal; but precisely on this account she is heart-rending in the little duet with her bridegroom, who now, heaven having kindly dispensed him from the dangerous office of avenger, wishes to proceed to the marriage ceremony. The fugue chorus completes the work to a perfect whole.

I hurried back to my room, in the greatest state of excitement I had ever experienced; the waiter summoned me to the *table d'hôte*, to which I followed him mechanically; on account of the city fair, the company assembled was numerous, and the general topic of conversation was the performance of *Don Giovanni* just given. The exciting action and singing of the Italian company are universally praised; but petty remarks, freely made, prove that few persons have penetrated, even remotely, into the deeper subtleties of this opera of operas. Don Ottavio had pleased much; Donna Anna, according to somebody's opinion, had been too passionate. "On the stage," he maintained, "singers ought to be gracefully moderate, and avoid all that was over-exciting. The recital of the attempted nocturnal assault had really quite alarmed him." Here he took a pinch of snuff, and looked immeasurably foolish-wise at his neighbour, who asserted "The Italian *prima donna* was, upon the whole, a fine woman, but sadly neglectful about her costume and ornaments. In that very scene, a curl had escaped and spoilt the one profile of her face." Another now began to hum "*Fin ch' han dal vino*," upon which a lady remarked, "Don Giovanni had pleased her least of anyone; the Italian was much too dark, much too serious, and altogether had not given the frivolous, gay character with sufficient lightness." The final explosion was much lauded. Tired of such nonsense, I hastened to my chamber.

(In the *Stranger's Box*, No. 23). My dull room

felt so narrow, so oppressive. At midnight, my dear Theodor, methought I heard thy voice. Thou spokest my name distinctly, and the paper door seemed to shake. What should prevent me from again visiting the scene of my wonderful adventure? Perhaps there I may behold thee and her who fills my whole being! How easy it is to remove my little table—two lights—writing materials; the waiter comes with the punch ordered, finds my room empty, and the papered door open. He follows me to the box, and looks at me with doubting mien. At a sign from me he places the bowl on the table and withdraws, a question on his lips as he again turns towards me; turning my back on him, I lean over the edge of the box and gaze into the deserted house, the architecture of which, dimly illumined by my two candles, stands out in strange and weird proportions. The curtain moves, blown about by the draught of air which rushes through the space. If it should rise? if Donna Anna, scared by horrid phantoms, should appear? “Donna Anna!” I exclaim involuntarily; the cry resounds through the empty area; the spirits of the instruments in the orchestra are aroused; aerial tones re-echo tremblingly, and appear to whisper repeatedly the beloved name. I cannot throw off a strange dread, but the sensation is pleasant to my nerves. I become master of myself, and feel impelled, my Theodor, to express to thee how, according to my belief, the deeper characteristics of the great work of our divine composer may be apprehended. Only a poet understands a poet; only a romantic mind can appreciate romance; only the poetically entranced soul, initiated into the mysteries of the Temple, can properly receive that which the initiated expresses in a poetic trance. If we take the poem of Don Juan, without imparting to it a deeper signification, that is, merely as a story, we can scarcely comprehend how Mozart could compose and imagine such music to it. A *bon vivant*, immeasurably fond of wine and women, insolently invites to his joyous table a stone figure, as representative of an old father whom he has killed in defence of his own life. Certainly in all this there is nothing very poetic, and to speak candidly, such a man hardly deserves that supernatural powers should distinguish him as a cabinet-specimen of hell; that the stone man, vivified by his released soul, should trouble himself to get off his horse in order to admonish the sinner to repentance, and that, lastly, the Devil should expedite his best hands to effect his transportation to the lower kingdom in the most imposing manner. Thou mayest rely upon it, my Theodor, that Nature had furnished Don Juan, like many of her favourites, with every gift which raises a man above his fellows. A powerful, handsome frame, a fascination which, like brilliant radii, dazzles all gazers, an ardent imagination, and a quick intelligent mind; spiritually superior, such are destined to sway the common herd who, like cyphers, only gain value when following a figure which imparts their importance to them. But the dreadful result of original sin is, that the arch-enemy has retained the power of tempting mankind and of placing wicked pitfalls in his path when his steps tend towards the highest goal. This conflict of heavenly and devilish powers is made manifest in man by his love of earthly joy, and his hope of eternal joy. Don Juan, impelled by ardent aspirations ever burning in his veins, vainly fancied to find satisfaction in worldly pleasure, which his

physical and mental constitution enabled him eagerly and restlessly to pursue. Here on earth nothing so much elevates the inward nature of man as love; it is that which, by its mysterious yet powerful agency, destroys or improves the elements of our nature; what wonder, then, that Don Juan hoped love might calm the yearnings of his heart? What wonder that the Devil seized this occasion to throw the noose round his victim's throat? The enemy whispered in Juan's ear that the innate longing which agitates our breast, and is, in truth, a heavenly promise that we are connected with a higher world, might even on earth find full satisfaction in the love of a high-souled woman. Restlessly flying from one beauty to another, ever fancying himself mistaken in his choice, ever hoping to discover his idea of final content, Juan at length finds all earthly joys flat and dull, and despising mankind in general, especially resents the deceptive illusion which, appearing to him as the first object in life, has so bitterly disappointed him. At present, each conquest he makes is, not a gratification to his sensuality, but a blasphemous sneer against Nature and the Creator. Profound contempt for every-day views of life, above which he feels himself elevated, and bitter scorn for men who trust to obtain happiness in mutual love, and in the plebeian unions formed by it—these feelings impel him especially to arrogantly work destruction and serve as an instrument to the pernicious Being who, like some hideous monster, sports with the wretched objects of his hate. Every blight cast on a beloved, pure bride—every irremediable blow dealt on the happiness of lovers is a successful triumph to that mysterious yearning, to that restless striving to elevate himself above common-place life—above nature—above the Creator. He does, in fact, rise more and more above the general world, but only to fall deeper into the abyss. The highest point at which he has arrived, is Anna's seduction and its accompanying events. Donna Anna is well matched against Don Juan, as regards the highest gifts of nature; as Juan is originally an extraordinarily organised, superior man, so is Anna a divine woman, over whose pure soul the Devil has no power; all the arts of hell can only ruin her physically, and when Satan has completed this ruin, the decrees of Providence ordain that vengeance shall no longer be postponed. Don Juan scoffingly invites to his joyous carouse the effigy of the stabbed old man, whose blessed spirit now only compassionating perverted human nature, disdains not in awful aspect, to inculcate repentance. But so deteriorated, so hardened is Juan's soul, that not even the hope of eternal forgiveness can call forth one ray of faith to light him on to better ways. Without doubt, my dear Theodor, you have remarked that I have spoken of Anna's ruin, and I will, in a few words, tell you (as well I may in this hour, when my powers are overwhelmed by crowding thoughts and feelings) how the two antagonistic natures of Juan and Anna presented themselves to my mind through the medium of Mozart's music. I mentioned above that Donna Anna was well-matched against Don Juan. What if Donna Anna had been originally formed by nature to disclose to Don Juan by means of love, the innate superiority of his soul, and to release him from the despair of his fruitless longings? Too late! He beheld her in his days of hardened villainy, and then he was only seized by the fiendish desire to destroy her. She did not escape, and only Don Juan, aided by infernal

powers, could inspire her with real passion, irresistible through filling her with agony and terror. Her father's murder by Don Juan's hand, her affiance to the cold, effeminate, common-place Don Ottavio, whom she once fancied she loved—the inwardly devouring flame of unholy love which flashed up and burns on, changed to glowing hatred;—all these conflicting emotions tear her breast; she feels that only Don Juan's destruction can bring peace to her soul, martyred by deadly torments; but this peace will be her own spiritual annihilation. She unceasingly urges her ice-cold bridegroom to revenge—she herself pursues her betrayer, and only when the dark powers have dragged him to their abyss, does she become calmer; her restless thirst of vengeance is quenched, but she finds no consolation in the tame affection of Don Ottavio, and answers his persuasions with "*Lascia, o caro, un anno ancora allo sfogo del mio cor.*" She will not outlive that year—Don Ottavio will never espouse her whose pure soul alone prevented her remaining the devoted bride of Satan. How inwardly did I feel convinced of all this during the heart-rending tones of the recitative and the recital of the nocturnal assault! Even the song of Donna Anna in the second act, "*Crudele*," which, superficially viewed, appears merely addressed to Ottavio, expresses in its pathetic notes and strange allusions, the inward struggles of a soul, despairing of every earthly happiness; what else can mean the mysterious words: "*Forse un giorno il cielo ancora sentirà pietà di me?*"

Two o'clock strikes! a warm, electric breath passes near me—I recognize the scent of a delicate Italian perfume, which last evening first led me to suppose a female neighbour; a rapturous emotion takes possession of me, which I could only express in music. The wind blows gustily through the empty theatre; the chords of the pianoforte in the orchestra vibrate. Oh, heavens! from afar off I seem to hear Donna Anna's voice, borne towards me on the wings of aerial harmonies! Unfold thyself, thou distant, unknown spirit-world—thou Djinnistan of glory, where unspeakable ecstasies and overwhelming joys fill the enraptured soul above measure and beyond all earthly imaginings; let me join the circle of thy beauteous apparitions; let dreams, through which thou dost disclose to man unutterable bliss, while the body lies in leaden bonds of sleep, convey my spirit into thy ethereal realm." *****
(*Next day's conversation at the table d'hôte, as post-script.*)

FOOLISH-WISE MAN WITH SNUFF-BOX (*tapping loudly on its lid*)—It is really vastly disagreeable that we shall not be able to hear an opera again for some time; this comes of that cursed exaggeration!

MULATTO-FACE—Yes, yes; I've said so often enough; the character of Donna Anna always fatigued her excessively; yesterday, she was like one possessed; they say she was in a swoon all the time between the acts; and, during the scene in the second act, she had hysterics.

INSIGNIFICANT PERSON—Indeed? Dear me!

MULATTO-FACE—Yes; I assure you—hysterics, and could not be got off the stage.

MYSELF—For heav'n's sake! Hysterics are not of consequence. We shall soon hear the Signora again?

FOOLISH-WISE MAN WITH SNUFF-BOX (*taking a pinch*)—I hardly think so, mein Herr, for this morning, at two o'clock precisely, the Signora died!

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE Saturday Concerts at this establishment, (which are now looked forward to with real interest both by amateurs and professors,) commenced on the 2nd ult., under the able direction of Mr. Manns. The principal novelty has been a bright overture of Schubert's, written at the age of 18, for a little Operetta, called "*Die beiden freunde von Salamanka.*" This composition was received with that favour which so graceful and genial a work must always command, even from those who are profoundly impressed with the riper genius evinced in the composer's later productions. Another overture, in C, by Beethoven, almost unknown, has also been performed; and we need scarcely say that, although not equal in merit to the great works of this class already popular, it is fully worthy of the reputation of its composer. All the instrumental portion of the programmes at these concerts have been uniformly good; but we much regret that Claribel's trashy ballads should find a place at performances which profess rather to educate, than to administer to the public taste.—On Saturday the 23rd ult. Handel's *Acis and Galatea* was given with much effect, the principal parts being assigned to Madame Florence Lancia, Mr. G. Perren, Mr. Montem Smith, and Mr. Edward Connell.

A VERY excellent series of Monthly Popular Concerts has been organised by Mr. Ridley Prentice, at the Angell Town Institution, Brixton. The programmes will be selected on the plan of the Monday Popular Concerts, at St. James's Hall. The names of Messrs. H. Blagrove and Weist Hill are announced for the first violin, Messrs. Amor and Ralph for second violin, Messrs. R. Blagrove and Burnett for viola, and Messrs. W. H. Aylward and W. Pettitt for violoncello, Mr. Ridley Prentice being the pianist. Several favourite vocalists are engaged; and the enterprise promises and deserves success. The first concert took place on Thursday the 21st ult.

AN evening concert, under the able direction of Mr. Constantine, was given at the City of London College on the 14th ult., the principal vocalists being Miss E. Robertson, Madlle. Cecile Valverde, Mr. J. Thurley Beale, and Mr. Stedman. The first part contained selections from *St. Paul* and *Elijah*, the choruses in which were very carefully rendered, Miss E. Robertson sang "*Jerusalem*," with much feeling; "*O God have mercy*," and "*If with all your hearts*" were rendered with excellent effect by Mr. J. T. Beale and Mr. Stedman, and Madlle. Cecile Valverde gave "*O rest in the Lord*" with good expression. "*Gratias Agimus*" was also well sung by Miss E. Robertson and deservedly encored, the playing of the Clarinet *obbligato*, by Dr. W. H. Stone, materially enhancing the effect. In the second part, which was entirely secular, several choral pieces were excellently given. Mr. Docker admirably accompanied the vocal music.

A CONCERT took place on the 12th ult., at the Cambridge Hall, Newman Street, in aid of the Sloane Street (West End) Welsh Chapel Building Fund. The principal vocalists were Miss Evans, Miss Lloyd, Miss M. A. Williams, Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Williams; Messrs. John Evans, Edwin Jones, T. E. Thomas, E. W. Evans, Davies, Griffiths, and Francis. The chorus numbered about forty, Mr. Griffith Jones being the conductor, and Professor Barrett the accompanist. There was a full attendance, giving reasonable hope that the fund has profited by the performance.

THE Islington Choral Association gave a Concert on Thursday evening the 7th ult., which was thoroughly successful. The programme contained selections from the *Twelfth Mass*, *Messiah*, *Creation*, *Judas Maccabeus*, *Saul*, *Eli*, *Solomon*, and *Engedi*. Miss Riseam's singing of "*He was despised*," was much admired; and Mr. Platt was encored in "*Sound an alarm*." The other solo vocalists were Miss Dixon and Mr. Hubbard. The room was crowded.